Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-13 (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A method for transparently exchanging data packets of a packet-oriented network by a network node device, the packet oriented network comprised of at least one network element connected to the network node device, each network element having a unique address within the packet-oriented network, the network node device utilizing the method comprising:

setting up a connection between a first network element and an external device, the connection being set up such that the unique address of the first network element is converted to an address valid for the external device;

verifying message header entries of data packets exchanged between the external device and the first network element;

~~establishing a temporarily transparent connection between the first network element and the external device;~~

determining whether a message header entry characterizing an expanded packet-oriented protocol is within the message header entries; ~~and~~

if the message header entry is determined to characterize an expanded packet-oriented protocol, establishing a temporarily transparent connection between the first network element and the external device, the unique address of the first network element that is valid for the

external device being transferred to the external device without converting that unique address for a duration of the temporarily transparent connection. ~~device;~~

~~transferring the unique address of the first network element to the external device without converting the unique address of the first network element after a message header entry characterizing an expanded packet-oriented protocol is determined to be within the message header entries.~~

15. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the unique address of the first network element is assigned by the external device while the connection is set up between the first network element and the external device.

16. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein a modulation/demodulation device connects the external device to the network node device such that the network node device exchanges data packets of the packet-oriented network with the external device via the modulation/demodulation device.

17. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein a modulation/demodulation device connects the external device to the network node device such that the network node device exchanges data packets of the packet-oriented network with the external device via the modulation/demodulation device.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein a verification is carried out before the transparent connection for the first network element is set up to determine whether a transparent connection already exists for a least one other network element.

19. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein a verification is carried out before the transparent connection for the first network element is set up to determine whether a transparent connection already exists for a least one other network element.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 16, wherein a verification is carried out before the transparent connection for the first network element is set up to determine whether a transparent connection already exists for a least one other network element.

21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein a maximum number of transparent connections is defined depending on a specification of the external device.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein a maximum number of transparent connections is defined depending on a specification of the external device.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21 further comprising rejecting an establishment of the transparent connection if another network element already has a transparent connection established.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 21 further comprising cancelling an existing transparent connection and subsequently establishing a transparent connection between the external device and a second network element.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14 further comprising terminating the transparent connection after a connection release request is detected.

26. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 25, wherein the connection release request is triggered when no data packets have been exchanged according to the expanded packet-oriented protocol within a predefined time period.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the communication of the at least one network element with the network node device is effected according to Internet protocol or according to PPPoE communication protocol.

28. (Currently Amended) A network node element for supporting a transparent exchange of data packets comprising:

at least one first network interface configured to connect to a packet-oriented network;

at least one second network interface configured to connect to an external device;

at least one monitoring unit operatively connected to at least one of the at least one first network interface and the at least one second network interface, ~~interface;~~ the at least one

monitoring unit configured to establish a temporarily transparent connection between at least one network element of the packet-oriented network and the ~~an~~ external device; and

wherein the network node element is configured to not convert a unique address of any network element that is allocated to that network element by the external device for a ~~the~~ duration of a temporarily transparent connection established between that network element and the external device.

29. (Previously Presented) The network node element according to claim 28, wherein the network node element is a router.

30. (Previously Presented) The network node element according to claim 28, wherein the at least one monitoring unit controls at least one bridging device of the network node element.

31. (Previously Presented) The network node element according to claim 29, wherein the at least one monitoring unit controls at least one bridging device of the network node element.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 wherein the expanded packet-oriented protocol is PPPoE.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 28 wherein the expanded packet-oriented protocol is PPPoE.

34. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the at least one network element is comprised of a plurality of network elements and communication of the network elements is effected according to at least one of Internet protocol and PPPoE communication protocol.

35. (Previously Presented) The network node element according to claim 28 wherein the at least one second network interface is comprised of a modem connected to the network node element.